

Domestic Abuse (Customer) policy

Document control							
Valid from	Valid to	Version	Status	Author	Owner	Approval	Description of change
Jan 2007		1	Final			FHL Board	
Jan 2008		2	Final			SMT	No major changes
Dec 2009		3	Final				Reviewed – changes made
May 2013	May 2016	4	Review	Head of N'hoods	Head of N'hoods	SMT	Minor
Apr 2019	Apr 2022	5	Final	Head of N'hoods	Head of N'hoods	Co-Exec Team	Major– rewritten policy
July 2022	July 2025	6	Final	Director of Housing	Director of Housing	Co-Exec	Changes to govt guidance
July 2025	July 2028	7	Final	Head of Communities	Director of Housing	CEX Group	Changes to reflect DAHA standards, Consumer standards and data protection.
Distribution:							
Other relevant documents:				Other related policies and strategies Domestic abuse procedure ASB policy & procedure Safeguarding policy Information sharing protocol – MARAC Hate crime & hate incident policy Regulatory consumer standards (2024) Home choices policy Tenancy policy Income maximisation policy Assignment policy Key legal and regulatory references: Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) 2014 (also known as Clare's Law) Family Law Act 1996 Protection from Harassment Act 1997 Equality Act 2010			

	Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 Serious Crime Act 2015 General Data Protection Regulation 2018 Consumer Standards 2024	
Comments:	The policy review reflects changes in accordance with the DAHA standards and principles, Consumer Standards 2024 and clarity on data protection and confidentiality.	
Please indicate that the following issues have been considered during the production and review of this policy	New legislation, regulation and best practice has been considered	Y
	Equity, diversity and inclusion	Y
	Health, safety and welfare	Y
	Data protection	Y
	Risk management	Y
	Sustainability	Y
	Value for money	Y

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1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy outlines what we (Futures Housing Group - FHG) will do to ensure that customers are safe in their own home. It will support the terms and conditions of all our tenancies and is aligned with the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) partnership.

We are active members of the domestic abuse and target hardening local partnership boards which ensures that we work consistently with partner organisations involved in our domestic abuse work.

- 1.2 We recognise that domestic abuse cannot be ignored. Very many people experience it and it is crucial that we proactively support customers who are experiencing or threatened with abuse. This policy applies to all our customers and those living with them as well as anyone we provide services to.

We have signed up to the Chartered Institute of Housing's (CIH) 'Make a Stand' pledge which was developed jointly with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) and Women's Aid. We are now working towards becoming an accredited DAHA provider.

- 1.3 As a landlord we are well placed to recognise the signs of abuse. We will take all reports seriously and seek to work with relevant partner organisations to support those affected.

Adequate support includes seeking to assist those perpetrators of domestic abuse who wish to change their behaviour by helping them access targeted support.

2.0 Background and definitions

- 2.1 Domestic abuse is a criminal offence and a breach of our tenancy agreements. It has an impact on people's safety as well as that of their households and local communities. Because this kind of abuse often happens in the home we have a role in identifying these issues, supporting those affected and taking action against perpetrators.

Section 79 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires all social landlords to offer lifetime tenancies to any new tenants who are survivors of domestic abuse.

The Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 introduces new rules for housing associations around the safety of homes. It includes 'consumer standards' which require us to work with other agencies tackling domestic abuse and to support tenants to get appropriate support and services.

2.2 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic abuse as:

"Behaviour by a person towards another person where both people are aged 16 or over and are personally connected and the behaviour is abusive. Behaviour is abusive if it consists of physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, psychological, emotional or other abuse. The behaviour may consist of a single incident or a course of conduct."

We use the definition of domestic abuse set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and have adopted this definition for this purpose of this policy. This and other definitions are set out in the domestic abuse customer procedure.

- 2.4 'By and for' services are specialist support services designed and delivered by and for local communities. They are led by people with the same cultural background, lived experience or identity as those they support - such as Black and minoritised women, LGBTQ+ survivors, disabled people or older survivors of domestic abuse.
- 2.5 We recognise that while anyone can experience domestic abuse, it is most commonly perpetrated by men against women. This understanding is central to the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) framework, which covers a range of gender-based violence including domestic abuse, sexual violence, coercive control, stalking, harassment, forced marriage and so-called honour-based abuse.

3.0 Commitment

- 3.1 We are committed to making a stand against any form of domestic abuse taking place within our customers' homes and communities. We will also seek to address domestic abuse affecting our employees.
- 3.2 We will treat every reported case with respect, fairly, in a believing and non-judgmental way. We will ensure that everyone has access to the information they need.
- 3.3 In line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, this policy recognises that children who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse are themselves victims. We commit to ensuring they have access to appropriate safeguarding and support services.
- 3.3 We will address all forms of abuse covered under VAWG including the experiences of men and LGBTQ+ people. We will ensure that our services are trauma-informed, inclusive and responsive to the specific needs of women and girls, while also supporting all victims and survivors regardless of their gender or sexual orientation. This approach ensures that domestic abuse is not treated in isolation but as part of a broader commitment to tackling gender-based violence.

- 3.4 We will handle all disclosures of domestic abuse sensitively and only share information with the customer's permission or when necessary, such as to ensure someone's safety or for legal reasons.
- 3.4 We will make sure that all our employees have appropriate knowledge, training and confidence to identify abuse, respond appropriately and refer customers to internal or specialist services.
- 3.5 Domestic abuse is everyone's responsibility so our approach will be underpinned by a Coordinated Community Response (CCR) and a Whole Housing Approach (WHA). Through this, we will partner with statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations and groups, including housing and homeless services, to address domestic abuse in an integrated and coordinated way. We will work to increase survivor safety, consider the diverse needs of people and communities, increase tenancy sustainment, reduce homelessness and hold perpetrators to account.

Policy aims

- Ensure that anyone experiencing domestic abuse has access to timely, right-first-time and appropriate services, tailored to their needs.
- Provide clear advice and options to survivors to give them choices and further support informed, survivor-led decision making.
- Publish information about domestic abuse services on our internal and external websites. We will make sure that this is accessible, visible and up-to-date to ensure that customers are correctly informed while giving them the option to self-serve and seek direct support. We will provide this in other languages and formats to raise awareness of domestic abuse as needed and take part in awareness raising events.
- Offer structured, needs-based and survivor-led support, including referrals to specialist partners, including 'by and for' services, advice and support with re-housing and help to access sanctuary schemes.
- Ensure safe access to localised 'by and for' services for all victims and survivors, because we know that people need support that fits with their culture and identity.
- Work collaboratively with individuals, statutory agencies and partners to assess and reduce risk through support, safety planning, target hardening and early intervention.
- Liaise with statutory and specialist agencies and charities to coordinate an effective and collaborative response and share information to inform and reduce the risk of harm.
- Make sure that children affected by domestic abuse have access to appropriate external services and safeguarding support.
- Provide safe and confidential ways for survivors to report abuse and get help without fear of reprisal or judgement.
- Support survivors to stay in their homes and live independently or move home safely and rebuild their lives at the right time.

- Hold perpetrators accountable through legal and tenancy enforcement, while offering access to support and behaviour change programmes where appropriate.
- Acknowledge and address barriers to accessing mainstream services, particularly for people with protected personal characteristics, by making sure that people's diverse needs and identities are taken into account when offering or delivering advice and support.
- Use feedback and insight data from customers and partners to improve our services and outcomes, in line with our continuous improvement commitment.

4.0 Monitoring

- 4.1 Our safeguarding & domestic abuse coordinators (part of our Communities team) are responsible for monitoring cases where domestic abuse has been reported and/or identified.
- 4.2 We will review each case monthly and report regularly to our Insight Committee and Customer Experience Group as part of our routine safeguarding reporting.
- 4.2 We will track all known cases that are part of MARAC or safeguarding arrangements. Other lower-level cases will be shared with partners, monitored and escalated accordingly.
- 4.3 We will share local statistical information with our strategic partners to help identify trends and outcomes which will help to inform wider domestic abuse and target hardening strategies.

5.0 Equity and diversity

- 5.1 We know that different types of abuse may have different effects on people depending on their background. We are committed to challenging abuse and will aim to:
 - Meet the needs and choices of people from all backgrounds and consider their religion or belief, race, gender and gender reassignment, age, disability, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnerships, pregnancy or maternity.
 - Make sure that our services are responsive and meet the needs of our existing and future customers and those living within our communities or working within our organisation.
 - Understand the cultural implications and any barriers to reporting domestic abuse.
 - Make sure that everyone living in our communities has equal access to

services.

6.0 Data protection and confidentiality

- 6.1 We will comply with our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 when dealing with domestic abuse cases. This includes sharing information with statutory agencies, MARAC information sharing arrangements and MARAC operating protocols. We will handle information about MARAC in accordance with any relevant MARAC information sharing agreement.
- 6.2 We will share information where we are legally required to. All information sharing decisions will be recorded, including the reasons for that decision.
- 6.3 We will report potentially criminal acts to the police.

7.0 Review of policy

We will review this policy and our domestic abuse procedures regularly to make sure that we continue to meet our customers' needs.

This will include a full review every three years as well as specific updates in response to changes to relevant legislation.